



1909-1959
UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CLUB
WINNIPEG



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THE UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CLUB OF WINNIPEG

By Elsie Moore and Avis Clark McWilliams

This informal story of the University Women's Club of Winnipeg, written on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary is intended to recall our club's beginnings to those of us who were part of them and its progress as it passed from one era into another. It serves also to remind us all that within the compass of fifty years, whether in the life of a club or of an individual there is a world of living.

Women in the early years of the 1900's were definitely club-minded, so it is not surprising that among those loath to lose all contact with college days was a group who sought to bring together in an organization graduates of our own university and those of other universities then resident in the city, numbering it was believed more than fifty. In 1908 many informal discussions were held as to the feasibility of the venture whose chief supporters were probably Dr. Mary Crawford, Miss Margaret Johnston and Mrs. A. V. Thomas, then Lillian Beynon. Early in 1909 was taken a definite step of an announcement in the newspapers calling together all university women graduates who were interested in the forming of a club. On May fifth the eventful meeting took place. The idea was enthusiastically received, a tentative constitution was accepted, a slate of officers with Dr. Mary Crawford as president was elected and twelve members were enrolled. It was decided that the first thirty joining the new organization should constitute the Charter Members of the club, but this number was later increased to fifty.

Dr. Mary Crawford was not only one of the earliest and most outstanding of the women physicians in Winnipeg but was active in everything intended to advance women's place in the community. She and Mrs. Thomas were associated in many adventures to this end. We were indeed fortunate in having as our first officers women so well known and so full of initiative.

The number of members grew slowly as the rapid expansion of the times brought an ever-changing personnel. Meetings were held for the most part in the University Girls' Room in the Y.W.C.A. furnished by Miss Telford in memory of her niece who had died just before her graduation. On special occasions we were guests of the old Rupert's Land, then Havergal College, or sometimes of the Music and Arts Building on Broadway, or of the University in one of the halls in the old Court House on Kennedy Street.

The programs were widely varied the very first being a talk on Dante by one of our own members, Mrs. Hadcock. However, not many were purely literary in type and Dante was followed by a discussion of the University Question — perhaps the proposed union of the colleges, perhaps the site; then there was an account of a journey taken to the northland by a fellow member, Mrs. Hay-Stead; a resume of the Budget Speech of the year; and the Dower Law as it affected women in western Canada. The latter was followed by an interview with the attorney-general — the club had made its initial venture into a study of the laws affecting women.

We weren't always so serious and the early years were sprinkled with receptions for this visitor or that. Chafing dish suppers and other mild festivities, when we went laden with home baked foods helped the social side of many occasions.

The name of our first honorary member, Mrs. W. H. Thompson, appears in an early program. Mrs. Thompson was an English-woman who at home had won great distinction for research on Internal Secretions within the Human Body and one evening talked to us of her work. There was an attempt to learn something of Civic Finances from the Assistant City Treasurer, Miss Galbraith; a talk on Our Responsibility Towards the Immigrant by the Rev. James Woods-worth; The Elusive Vote by Mrs. Nellie McClung and a contribution by Miss Edna Sutherland — The Oberammergau Play.

More and more women and girls were now working in the stores and factories of the province. An investigation into their welfare in the factories had been undertaken by Mrs. Claude Nash. Now the club sponsored a study of the conditions under which women worked in the department stores. A monograph was published and widely distributed and the club received considerable prestige from the publicity which followed. A minimum wage law for women and girls was passed soon after, making use of the information obtained by the Civic Committee of the club. This gave us a feeling of active participation in some valuable legislation.

Our interest in the girls attending the university was very keen and to some extent personal. They were the 'little sisters' soon to join us. Their numbers were still small enough to make contact possible and some of the happiest memories of the early days are of those contacts. For some years a rather formal luncheon, with toasts, was given each spring at one of the big hotels to do honour to the girls of that year's graduating class. One such occasion still remains in my memory, because of the two special guests who chatted to our delight of **their** college days. One was Mrs. Frances Newton, the mother of one of our American members who told of her days at Oberlin when the students, between classes, helped the runaway slaves along the secret lines to the Border and freedom. The other was Dr. Charlotte Ross whose medical course was interrupted by the bearing and care of six children. She later established herself near Whitemouth—the only doctor between Winnipeg and the then Rat Portage—and became a tradition as she laboured among the settlers, Indian and white.

The luncheons were highlights and came but seldom. More frequent were vocational teas held in the homes of members as part of another venture. The girls of the graduating class of the university were invited that we might meet with them and that they might listen to talks on vocations from someone able to tell from personal experience the rewards and sacrifices of her chosen profession. I noted that during one winter there were three teas, at one of which Dr. Ellen Douglass put forth the claims of Medicine, at another Mrs. A. V. Thomas talked of Journalism and at another Miss Rice spoke of Secretaryship.

Loans were made available to girls who for one reason or another found themselves without sufficient funds to complete their courses. Later, a scholarship for attainment gave further tangible expression of our interest in the woman undergraduate.

In 1913 came the reorganization of the University and the appointment of its first president, Dr. James A. MacLean. This was an occasion too important for casual hospitality and we decided to celebrate in a big way. There had been for some time a men's organization which called itself, "The University Club"—no qualifying adjective. It was now completely dormant but much prodding roused its members to a sense of the uniqueness of the event and they agreed to join with us in a formal dinner at the Royal Alexandra in honour of President and Mrs. MacLean and the representa-

tives of other universities who came with good wishes to this first installation. The committee worked very hard; the handsome dining-room of the Royal Alexandra held some four hundred guests and the head table was worthy of its distinguished company. The speakers were the President of the University of Washington and Dr. Robert Falconer of Toronto. To add a cosmopolitan touch cigars and cigarettes were served at the head table. We went home weary but happy and put away our gala gowns with the satisfied feeling that we had done our work well. Next day the deluge!irate telephone calls, yards of letters in the newspapers condemned those responsible for a dinner party of the intellectually elite at which tobacco and perhaps intoxicants had appeared. That they had was news to us, but we seethed with indignation at this implication that our beautiful party had been a drunken orgy. Mrs. McColl's carefully prepared scrapbook mentions the time and the place of the dinner but gives no details, no newspaper clippings. The next page shows the advertising material of lectures by Dr. Richard Moulton which the club was contemplating in the near future. The topics suggested The Moral Significance of Accident; Shakespeare and World Literature, by the man so widely known for his "Modern Readers' Bible" seem to have restored public confidence in our moral tone.

Other times — Other manners. Today, a major problem of the clubhouse — more and bigger ashtrays!

As a postscript I might say that this was the only occasion on which we attempted a formal dinner. When Mr. Sidney Smith became the next president of our university in 1934 we shared in a welcoming reception at which some four hundred and fifty representatives from seventy-six Canadian, American, British and continental universities came together to do him honour.

Dr. Moulton's lectures were held in the Congregational Church at that time our only auditorium. The arrangements had been made directly with him without the aid of an agent and we were carrying out all the details ourselves: our president introduced the speaker and members of the club acted as ushers. Imagine how deflated we felt when a distinguished and much loved citizen waiting to be taken to his seat said, "Couldn't you girls get some of your beaux to do this for you? It isn't seemly to see you running up and down the aisles, just like men!"

These lectures were not our first venture in the field of informative entertainment. In December, 1911, Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst whose name is forever associated with the story of the British Women's struggle for the right to vote, came to Winnipeg to lecture and the club, greatly daring, sponsored her appearance in the same Congregational Church. Few of the members opposed the undertaking, but some felt that there was a distinct difference between a proper academic interest in a movement advancing the right of women to share in the government and personal association with the leader of its campaign of violence: who had fought with policemen; set fire to His Majesty's mail boxes, chained herself to lamp posts so that she could not be removed from a vantage point from which to shout her message to members of the government; who, to sum it up had become only too familiar with jails from the inside. Some of us refused to sit with the executive on the platform, but as we took our inconspicuous seats in the audience, practically incognito, we had an uneasy feeling that we were traitors to our group and to our cause. Mrs. Pankhurst herself proved to be a lady of dignity and charm, of the type to be met in any English drawing room. Few who saw her will forget either the cold clear logic of her speech or

the dauntless figure whose fragility was emphasized by the filmy scarf about her slim shoulders.

The lecture was a success in every way and greatly increased the balance in our treasury, which later was sadly depleted when Dr. Moulton's distinguished lectures failed to interest as many people as we had expected. A few months later we seized the opportunity of bringing to Winnipeg Helen Keller and her wonderful teacher Mrs. Macy. It was a moving occasion and the club was happy to be the means of presenting to their fellow citizens a woman whose personal and educational attainments had amazed the world.

When the club under the presidency of Mrs. Margaret McWilliams met again in the autumn of 1914, the war was uppermost in our thoughts. Instead of literary or academic discussions our regular sessions now took the form of sewing meetings when we worked twice each week on dressing gowns for hospitalized soldiers. These gowns were bulky and awkward to handle as well as to sew, but they became our job as we were a closely organized group, able to purchase the materials we used and to work under direction. This we did diligently and with some success.

The vocational teas for undergraduates and some of the Club's social functions still continued but with arrangements of the simplest possible character. The civic committee which had made the survey of the working conditions in department stores now took over an enquiry into the increase in food prices in Manitoba, compiling statistics on the importation into Winnipeg of a number of food stuffs with a view to awakening greater interest in the possibilities of producing such commodities for the home market.

We had gained some experience and discovered a source of revenue in our ventures into the lecture field. Now when people craved first hand information on what was happening at the war fronts with no radio or television to add colour to the news provided by the daily press, we were fortunate in securing at intervals well known war correspondents, still fresh from the mud of the trenches, to satisfy the longing for news. The demand for tickets and the satisfaction of the audiences showed the value of our effort as did in a material way the gratifying financial returns. Ian Hay Beith, Alexander Powell and Frederick Palmer were all highly popular and the club in addition to materials purchased and prepared for hospital use was able to turn over more than \$1,200.00 to various war services.

With the turn of the New Year our club suffered two stunning blows. Mrs. Copeland who had headed the civic committee while it was doing such outstanding work and was now president lost her life by fire in a tragic accident. She had played an important part in all our activities and her clear intellect and warm personality made her loss a very real grief. Her place as president was filled by Miss Margaret Springate, who died during the scourge of Spanish Influenza which followed the Armistice. Again we mourned for one whose interest in the club and contribution to it had been a constant source of inspiration.

It seemed for the moment as though the club would succumb under this second blow, especially as it was a time when post war conditions brought new demands, new interests and the existing clubs were all at a very low ebb. However the members rallied around Mrs. Lennox who made a much appreciated effort in taking on the responsibilities of president. One realized that in a brief decade the club had become a distinct entity with a part in the community as in the lives of its members.

Within a short time two events of importance gave us fresh enthusiasm and incentive. First there was the new sense of importance brought about by the formation of the National and International Federations of University Women and later the happy arrangement by which we were able to take the first step toward our cherished goal—a club house of our own.

For some time the idea of a federation of the various Canadian University Women's Clubs was in the minds of many of their members, but active steps were taken first in 1919 when the plans of the British and American women to unite with some of the continental organizations were on the eve of success and the Canadian Clubs were urged to federate at once that Canada might be included in the first group of countries to enter the proposed International Federation. Through the efforts of Mrs. Margaret McWilliams an organization meeting was held in Winnipeg in the summer of 1919 with delegates from both east and west. A tentative constitution was accepted and officers and committee chairmen elected. Mrs. McWilliams became the first president, Mrs. Lennox the first corresponding secretary of the national organization. Of the objectives set down, a scholarship of \$1,000.00 for post graduate study was emphasized. The Winnipeg club had been successful in its lecture ventures. It was decided to add to the new federation's treasury and give the clubs a joint project by persuading outstanding lecturers to make a tour of the club cities. Bliss Carman and Vachel Lindsay were the first to appear under the federation's auspices, but it was soon realized that distances in Canada were too great to make such tours a financial success. The meetings were to be triennial and the first was held in Toronto in August, 1920. There were now twelve clubs in the federation with a membership of 1,123. Sufficient money was in sight to advertise the first scholarship. But the outstanding feature of the meeting was the report brought back by our five delegates to the International which had met in England the previous month. The Canadian Federation had been welcomed as one of the original members and Mrs. McWilliams its president was elected vice-president of the International which consisted of eight countries with seven others ready to join.

From that time on not only the National Federation but the individual clubs were deeply conscious of the international bond. Fortunate members from many of the clubs, including our own planned their trips abroad to coincide with the meeting of the International in Paris, Oslo, Cracow, Zurich and other fascinating places. They came back to tell in glowing terms of the scholarship of women of the continental countries and of the hospitality which gave them an insight into the country far beyond that of the ordinary tourist. Crosby Hall, the historic house in Sir Thomas More's garden in Chelsea, became the club house not only of the British women, but of all the members of the International. To it they went for pleasure when travelling abroad; many had had a share in its purchase and when it was damaged during the bombing of London, a part in its restoration. University women during the war forced to become refugees gathered there and to it we sent contributions of money and clothing.

The National Federation was still closer. To it we had a financial obligation which in those days of careful budgeting was a consideration. There were the triennial and executive meetings at which each club was usually well represented. The larger clubs took their turn at playing host and became still more interested as they planned the entertainment of the delegates. The presidential tour of each national president was a link of real importance and did much to make us

feel a united whole. The Winnipeg club has been particularly proud of the fact that from its membership three of the national presidents have been chosen: the first, Mrs. Margaret McWilliams; later, Mrs. Ursilla Macdonnell, now of Kingston; and of course, quite recently our Professor Doris Saunders.

It is a pleasure to report that the membership of the federation has increased to 9,140 in 96 clubs and alumnae associations. The success of the federation scholarship scheme is a source of pride. Instead of the one scholarship of \$1,000.00 as in 1919 there are now four totalling in value \$8,500.00. In addition this year 79 clubs and 6 alumnae associations have together awarded \$22,087.00 in scholarships, bursaries and prizes to aid deserving and distinguished students in many fields.

Undoubtedly the national and international outlook had a stimulating effect upon our club, but its immediate future was affected still more by an arrangement with the American Women's Club which gave us part time use of their commodious club room. However I shall leave the whole clubhouse story to Avis McWilliams. She, as Avis Clark, chairman of the house committee did more than any other individual member to further our progress from this shared accommodation to our present proud ownership of the stately house whose atmosphere of hospitality and culture was passed on to us by the honoured family whose home it originally was.

THE CLUB HOUSE

It was only two years after the organization of the University Women's Club that the idea of a permanent home for the Club began to take shape. It was no such ambitious idea as a Club House of one's own but of a Women's Club House. Information was sought regarding the organization and management of such Club Houses but history does not tell the outcome. Seven years of silence. By that time the idea had grown. At the first Executive meeting under the leadership of the president, Mrs. Luther Lennox, a committee of ten with Mrs. Margaret McWilliams as convenor was appointed to look into the possibility of obtaining a permanent home for the Club. However, the general meeting, January 1919, felt the time was not opportune to launch into such a scheme. The committee was asked to obtain the most suitable rooms available. Consequently, an offer by the American Women's Club to share their rooms in the Scott Block, one evening and two afternoons a week at a rental of thirty-five dollars a month, was accepted. To finance this project thirty-five members (later fifty-seven) pledged themselves to pay three dollars a year for club room privileges—a five dollar fee having been rejected by the Club. Several pledged themselves as guarantors for the rent. So began the fund which twenty years later was to be used to furnish our present home. Indeed, we began then by purchasing a samovar which served us tea in those early days and, when the last vestige of club rooms had disappeared, became the responsibility of successive presidents until it found its place in our permanent home where it is still doing duty.

This House committee entertained club members at Saturday teas. Among the many guests of honour were Kathleen Parlow, Baroness Orczy, Doyley Carte Opera Company. Even the children were not forgotten. For them, it arranged picnics and parties. At one Christmas party, the mother's prize for bringing the largest number of future club members went to Mrs. John T. Haig. Any social affairs seemed to be the duty of this group. In addition, it arranged some evening programmes. The Club proper had one evening a month for

which it paid the rent of the rooms. This arrangement lasted for two years. Because it was felt that the Club was divided by the two different fees and also, that the club rooms had added to the value of the Club and should not be abandoned, the general fee was raised to five dollars, three of which was assigned to the House Fund.

Three pleasant years were spent with the American Women in the Scott and Donalds Blocks. Then the Club moved to the Marlborough Hotel, finances being the motive. Again, after two years, finances intervened and the transfer was made to the Fort Garry Hotel. Here we paid five dollars a meeting. The opportunity for social contacts had vanished. The fee was reduced to three dollars. The House Committee no longer functioned.

During the five years, the House fund which, in addition to fees, had been fed by money raised by private enterprises and by occasional surpluses from the Club funds, had grown to the sum of \$1,000 in bonds and \$36.00 in cash—a noticeable increase from the \$13.00 surplus at the end of the first year. A nice nest-egg for the future!

For a decade the Club House Fund had lain dormant. Early in September 1938, the Convenor of the House Committee—a committee which had been revived just the preceding spring—received a call from Miss Edna Sutherland suggesting that the University Women's Club take the lead in obtaining for a Women's Club House the home of the late Dr. C. W. Gordon which the family had vacated recently.

Three of the committee went to look it over. As we stood in the doorway looking through to the drawing-room flooded with sunshine, we (at least, one of us) knew that, at last, we had found our home. To be sure, there were many defects to be remedied but in comparison with the many desirable features, these seemed mere details. The possibilities were limitless. It was only when we came out into the hard light of day that the practical side of our nature asserted itself. Could we and if so, how? When later, the Committee met with the Executive the suggestion of a Women's Club House was emphatically brushed aside. It was to be the University Women's if possible.

Events moved quickly. Members were invited to survey the house Sept. 19 and to attend a meeting in Sparling Hall Sept. 20 ready to express their opinions. They did. To say the least, the consideration of the proposition was thorough. After the President, Mrs. Rhodes Smith, had spoken briefly on the advantages of a Club House, after Mrs. Lennox had told of the original plan as of 1919, and after the Convenor of the House Committee had given a detailed report on the possibilities of the house under discussion and had sketched methods of financing, the committee was given full powers to investigate the feasibility of taking over the house. Members who would be willing to pay a fee of ten dollars were asked to sign to that effect. The fees, as they have always been and, I suppose, always will be, had been a controversial element in the discussion.

There followed a brief period of intense activity. A special committee composed of the President, the Convenor of the House committee, and Mrs. Margaret McWilliams was appointed to interview the City into whose hands the house had come eventually after the Trust Company in charge had found it impractical for division into smaller units. When the Club met again the House Committee had summed up its deliberations as follows:

1. The house was to be taken on a rental basis. It was to be put into first class condition.
2. Ten rooms were available for residents, to be furnished by themselves.

3. Rooms could be rented to organizations for their meetings.
4. A membership of, at least, two hundred at a fee of ten dollars was a necessity. If not that number, other women with similar interest to ours should be admitted as members with house privileges only at a fee of fifteen dollars. The number should not exceed 25% of the regular membership. An entrance fee should be paid the following year by all new members.
5. A manager, Mrs. Carlyle, who was well known to Winnipeggers and whose name alone would be an attraction, was available.
6. The House fund, which during these intervening years had been gathering moss, now amounted to \$1500.00 in bonds and \$765.00 in cash. This could be used for furnishings. The House committee should have the power to use the fund as they saw fit.

The recommendations of the House Committee were acted upon. The City was most co-operative. The rent was within our means. Extensive repairs were undertaken, even some structural changes to suit the purposes of a club. Both Club and City benefitted. Instead of demolishing the house as was the intention, the City received a remuneration in rent, equivalent at least, to the original taxes.

For five months to March 10, the House Committee of fourteen met one evening every week. From these fourteen, convenors were chosen to be responsible for certain sections. New convenors were appointed as time went on to cope with new problems. Perhaps, the two who had the most time-consuming convenorships were Mrs. C. A. Hallberg and Mrs. E. D. Honeyman. Mrs. Hallberg had the task of equipping the dining-room and kitchen—a task of endless detail. Mrs. Honeyman was responsible for the rooms used for Club purposes. She haunted auction sales. Both found it necessary to appoint sub-committees and these in their turn sub-sub-committees. In all there were some twenty-odd committees. Thus was included a large proportion of the membership. Each week convenors reported to the main committee on what they had found that was desirable and suitable. Each item was discussed, the pennies counted and consent granted or withheld. We bought everywhere and at all varieties of prices. The time was propitious as large homes were being dismantled and some fine pieces of furniture less suitable for smaller quarters than for ours became available at prices ridiculously low, even in those times. For example the mahogany dining-room suite complete with twelve chairs, was bought for \$150.00, three chesterfield suites for \$85.00, the large Asia Minor rug for the drawing room but which, in its old age, has been demoted to the Lower Lounge, for \$245.00. No wonder our fund accomplished so much! We begged our members for discarded kitchen ware, for furniture for staff rooms. We begged for volunteers to paint, to sew, "signifying their preference for plain sewing, embroidery or needle point, or for any other work for which they had a talent." The response was generous. In her own way, practically every member of the Club shared in this enormous and exciting project.

Friends were kind in offering us many gifts and loans which are scattered through the house. One of our first was the portrait of Dr. C. W. Gordon which hangs in the hall, the gift of Mrs. Gordon and family. Later, in June 1948, a bronze plaque was placed on the south-east corner of the house by the Historical Sites and Monuments Board of Canada marking it as the former home of Rev. C. W. Gordon who wrote under the name of Ralph Connor. He was known in many countries by his novels and lectures depicting both the early and later life of Canada.

At last, on March 10, 1939 all was in readiness to welcome the

members to the reception held especially for them. The committee took great pleasure in showing them every room fully furnished and equipped for Club use. Even the rooms of those in residence (five of them) were on display. All except 80% of the cost of the heavy electric equipment bought on a deferred plan, had been paid for by the original fund. The enthusiasm shown was ample reward for the time and effort so many members had put into the project. The President of the University, Dr. Sidney Smith formerly opened the Club House at a reception held later for which invitations were issued to the many interested citizens. It was gratifying to see the reaction of our gentlemen guests, many of whom had doubted women's ability to carry out, with so little money, a project of this magnitude.

The Club House had begun to function. It was a flood that swept over us. Never had such enthusiasm been imagined. To the lay mind, the task of house management seemed an impossible one. Mrs. Carlyle, however remained calm and with the help of the Advisory Food Committee carried on. During the next seven weeks over 3000 meals of various types were served. At the end of the following club year, in a period of fourteen months, all outstanding debts had been paid, residents occupied the ten rooms, several organizations were making the House their meeting place, entertainment was being maintained. Membership had grown from 194 to 344 with an additional 60 Privileged members. The increase in fees had provided for improvements and additional furniture for Club rooms. The Club House was a financial success.

Now all activities were centered in the House—an inestimable advantage. The Red Cross group of the Second World War had more convenient quarters than those of the First. They met one full day a week in the Lower Lounge which was filled with sewing machines and busy workers, turning out innumerable garments. The noon snack was not only a pleasant interlude but also another bond of friendship.

The Privileged members, then and since, have been much appreciated for their contributions to the Club House. Without them the Club would not have ventured into the unknown. They have added to that essential back-log of fees each year as well as entertaining more than their share. It has been a happy relationship.

On the whole, the Club has been particularly fortunate in its managers. To them goes the credit of a large part of the success of the House. In addition to their efficiency, they have shown their ability to meet a crisis—a valuable attribute in a Club House where crises seem to abound. Their keen interest in all the activities and their friendliness have created a home atmosphere which even a stranger can appreciate.

It took the following year to clarify rules, to adjust policies already instituted. At this point, the actual establishment of the Club House was complete. Successive House Committees have found their hands full in continuing the work just begun. One has only to look around to realize the time, the thought and the energy, not of one but of many that have gone into the replacements, re-arrangements, structural changes. Yet the character of the house has not been changed. To the oldest members it is still the same dear friend.

Our experience as tenants prepared us for the last momentous step toward the attainment of our objective—the purchase of the house. When it became evident that there was grave danger of the house being sold, it was deemed advisable to begin thinking toward purchase. A very thorough survey of the condition of the property had

been made. On the whole, the reports were favorable to purchase if the price were low enough. In December, 1945, the President with the invaluable help of our honorary legal advisor Mr. E. D. Honeyman carried on informal negotiations with the City Property Committee with the result that an offer was made by the Club, was rejected, revised and accepted. The house was ours. It was paid for in cash—a condition of purchase—accumulated in seven years of operation. There were liabilities, of course, for which we were prepared by the survey that had been made. Certain structural changes would have to be made to make it more suitable for our use as a club; completion of the Lower Lounge, the remodelling of the basement to give us necessary cloak hall accommodation and improvement in kitchen facilities—changes which could not have been made before. These began the following year and have been continued as finances allowed. However the total outlay has been a very small sum to pay to give us a home such as this. The purchase of the house gave a feeling of satisfaction to all, from the oldest to the youngest; to the oldest, because it was the culmination of a dreamt-of home and to the youngest, because it was they who would take on the responsibility of this inheritance.

Following the purchase of the house, a membership drive was organized. The result was an increase in regular membership from 361 to 529; almost triple the number when we entered the house in 1939. The Club House has been an attraction to bring in new members.

The Club House has been more than a financial success. The intangibles can not be estimated. It has been like a blood transfusion bringing renewed vigor to the life of the Club. As the numbers have increased so have the responsibilities. More of the members are necessarily involved in the Club business.

The Club has been able to resume its role as hostess as in the early days in rented rooms. Among the guests of honour, the most notable has been H.R.H. The Princess Alice whom the Directorate entertained at a luncheon followed by a reception to which members were invited.

Opportunities for informal sociability and the sharing in a project, of which we are all proud, have developed a spirit of fellowship and a sense of comradeship which had never been possible before. The bonds of friendship among our members have been strengthened more than one can tell.

AVIS CLARK McWILLIAMS

* * *

During and following the First War some of the members anxious to inform themselves more intelligently on international affairs formed a small study group under the leadership of Mrs. Margaret McWilliams. This was most successful and grew in numbers until eventually a second group and for a time a third had to be formed. With the occupation of the club house came the heyday of the group idea for one of its delights was its availability for any such purpose. The groups multiplied amazingly. Each was almost a club within a club with its separate executive and meetings, though each was open to every member interested and was carried on in addition to the regular club meetings. Poetry, Science, Child Psychology, Play Reading, Music, Interior Decorating, French, Legal Problems, Education, Bridge and Jaunting were some of the topics each of which occupied a dozen or so members who found pleasure not only in the subject but in the companionship within the group.

Of these the Education group submitted a brief to the Royal Commission on Education when it met within the province and the group on Legal Problems sent to Ottawa its findings relative to the inheritance tax. Definitely they were fulfilling the club's objective "to stimulate interest in public affairs." The Book Group was somewhat different from the others. Books bought were circulated according to a definite plan, among the members. They were read, reviewed and discussed and at the end of the season drawn for. Thus each member of the group had the pleasure of good reading, criticism and later on an addition to her shelves for an amazingly small expenditure of money. As membership in the club grew and more of the recent graduates joined, a group known as the "Young Grads" was formed with a special program of its own, its members gradually entering other groups according to their individual preferences. There is no limit to the range of subjects of the groups and I quite expect to see in next autumn's bulletin an invitation to join in a study on armchair space travel.

One of the Club's projects undertaken on behalf of the scholarship fund was the presentation of a series of distinctive three-act plays, the characters being taken for the most part by our own members. Those were the days when Winnipeg had a Community Theatre on North Main Street and a keen interest in amateur production. *Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire*; *The Dover Road*; *Mr. Pim Passes By* and *Dulcy* were presented in subsequent years, giving much pleasure to their audiences and hard work mixed with a good deal of fun to the actors. Mrs. Oliver Jewitt was one of the stars, as was Tannis Carson and we read in the old programs such familiar names as Bessie Bulman, Orlo Ferguson, Florence Stovel, Miriam Norton, Christine Hunter, Beulah Hickson and Helen Bryce.

The depression of the early thirties brought an attempt at service from certain specially trained members of the club. A nutrition group was formed with Mrs. Duncan, later Mrs. Sommerfeld, at its head and I read in the files a lengthy Free Press editorial commenting most favorably on the demonstration of food values given by the group to representatives of sixty-five organizations, when an adequate balanced diet for five persons (two adults and three children) was explained and the cost worked out to \$4.89 a week over a period of four weeks. In reply to voluminous mail from east and west, the group not only sent out copies of the menus and food charts but offered their services to any organization near at hand which desired a demonstration. With such a background it is quite natural that among the leaders of the present Canadian Association of Consumers should be some of the University Women's Club's outstanding members.

Early in the 30's the club made a survey of library conditions and needs in Manitoba. The results were decidedly depressing. It seemed wise that attempts at reform should begin first in the city where the problem was less complicated. At that time libraries came under the Health Committee in the municipal set-up and its over-worked members had neither time nor knowledge to deal adequately with library affairs. In 1935 representatives of the club approached the City Council to put the results of their inquiry before them and to ask the Council to establish a Library Board for the conduct of all matters pertaining to the library. This Board was eventually appointed with beneficial results. For their share in the change the club felt some justifiable pride.

It had always been hoped that the women who had received from the State the additional benefit of university training would repay that debt by service in provincial or municipal governing bodies. Few had done so but considerable interest was aroused when early in

the thirties several members stood for election and Mrs. Margaret McWilliams headed the poll as a candidate for a seat on the City Council. Additional interest in municipal affairs came with her reports of her work as alderman, but so far only a few members have felt themselves able to seek public office.

The club was much gratified at the honour paid Miss Cora Hind when the University of Manitoba granted her an honorary degree. She had long held a unique position as one of the world's outstanding authorities on grain and live stock and was without a peer as a crop estimator and agricultural advisor.

Honorary degrees were conferred by the university in later years on Mrs. Margaret McWilliams and Mrs. Mary Speechly who had brought distinction to the whole community by the rare value of their undertakings in education and in social welfare.

The University Women's Club paid its tribute later by conferring the honour of its first Life Membership upon Mrs. McWilliams and afterwards on Mrs. Speechly, Dr. Ellen Douglass, Mrs. Lennox and Mrs. C. B. Cross. We valued the contribution they had made to the club, but still more the years of association which left with each one of us something intangible from personalities so rare and fine.

To tell the story of Winnipeg's University Women's Club without Margaret McWilliam's part in it would be an impossibility. From the time she and her husband made this city their home and she sought out the club whose name and purpose promised congenial fellowship she identified herself with its interest and devoted her unusual talents to its welfare.

She was one of the fortunate people who not only dream the dream but can carry it to practical fulfilment. It was she who suggested our first lecture venture and guided our efforts to success; she who did much to keep the idea of a clubhouse before us and helped greatly in the negotiations which eventually made it a concrete fact. She had an unusually fine mind but I think that perhaps her greatest gift was her ability to endow whatever she was doing with a special value, a worthwhileness, which brought forth in those who worked with her powers they did not know they possessed. Her vision was never circumscribed and she stimulated us to work beyond the narrow academic interests which at first absorbed us. With her we studied world affairs and our outlook became first national then international through the federations she did so much to bring about.

Great as was her interest and affection for our club it was not the only outlet for her energies and her achievements in many fields soon went beyond the local scene till the club gained prestige from her association with it. She was Alderman Margaret McWilliams in the grim days of the depression carrying difficult committee responsibilities. She was Dr. Margaret McWilliams when her own university, Toronto, and her adopted one, Manitoba, conferred upon her honorary degrees in recognition of her rare and outstanding citizenship.

When her husband became Lieutenant Governor of the province she withdrew from her own special activities to take her place with him in another form of public service and as Chatelaine of Government House created an air of dignified yet informal hospitality which delighted guests of every rank.

Her personality was stimulating and full of colour and its warmth affected even the most casual acquaintance. She had a genius for friendship which was far reaching, yet at the same time

intimate. When her sudden death came she was deeply mourned by many persons in far distant places but to those who knew her best her death left a void never quite to be filled.

In looking through the club records one realizes that the fifty years have indeed seen a deal of living. What a wealth of pleasure and information in its programs! What has been told of Canada's contribution in Arts, Science, Drama and the Crafts! What pictures of the uttermost parts of the earth were brought to us often by our own members! What tales of endurance, told with humour, such as we heard from Mrs. George Black of the Yukon, who, herself followed the Trail of '98', and from Dr. Winifred Cullis who pictured the women of Britain as they met the Blitz! Who can forget the intense interest with which we listened to Dr. Glen Hamilton's Experiments and Experience in Psychic Research; the drama with which the glamorous Rosita Forbes clothed her conversations with Personalities of War and Peace and that hour of unrestrained joy when Stephen Leacock gave us his Analysis of Humour.

These pages record many activities. It has all been worthwhile and best of all it still goes on. In the world of the club as in the great one outside, the members come and go, each leaving the impress of her personality, each doing her bit toward the solid structure of the whole. The Young Grads' become the "Old Timers" adding their gifts of accomplishment.

I believe that the little group of the twelve Founding Sisters whose torch flickered so feebly those days of long ago would be happy to see that it still shines—and more brightly—and would join us in the hope and belief that its gleam points the way to a future rich in effort and fulfilment.

—ELSIE MOORE

PRESIDENTS, 1909-1959



1909-10 *DR. MARY CRAWFORD
 1910-11 *MISS MARGARET JOHNSTON
 1911-12 *MRS. H. R. HADCOCK
 *MISS E. L. JONES
 1912-13 *DR. MARY CRAWFORD
 1913-15 *MRS. R. F. McWILLIAMS
 1915-17 MISS ELSIE MOORE
 1917-18 *MRS. L. B. COPELAND
 *MISS MARGARET SPRINGATE
 1918-19 *MISS MARGARET SPRINGATE
 *MRS. G. L. LENNOX
 1919-20 *MRS. G. L. LENNOX
 1920-21 MRS. ELDON SIDDALL
 1921-22 *MISS E. M. MACDOUGALL
 1922-23 MRS. E. D. HONEYMAN
 1923-24 MISS MYRTLE LEWIS
 1924-26 *MRS. W. W. CROSS
 1926-28 MRS. C. A. HALLBERG
 1929-30 MRS. LEONARD HEATON
 1930-32 MISS MARY STEWART
 1932-34 MRS. J. S. DeLURY
 1934-36 DR. OLIVE COLE
 1936-38 MRS. F. G. RITCHIE
 1938-39 MRS. C. RHODES SMITH
 1939-41 MRS. H. B. SOMMERFELD
 1941-43 *MRS. NORMAN JAMES
 1943-45 MISS DORIS SAUNDERS
 1945-47 MISS AVIS B. M. CLARK
 (Mrs. R. F. McWilliams)
 1947-49 *MISS LELA McKNIGHT
 1949-51 MRS. W. B. DOERKSEN
 1951-53 MRS. C. RHODES SMITH
 MRS. C. S. GOW
 1953-55 MRS. C. S. GOW
 1955-57 MRS. CYRIL ASHMORE
 1957-59 MRS. GEORGE BROWNELL

* Deceased.

